

# OHIO ELEMENTARY CHAMPIONSHIPS

## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR PLAYERS

What you, the player, and your parents are expected to know  
about playing in this tournament

### Part I: Procedural Matters

**Arrive on time:** We recommend that all players arrive at the tournament by 9:30 am in order to hear the announcements. If you need to make any change to your entry (such as providing or correcting your school's name), you need to arrive even earlier, because, if you haven't made the necessary change before tournament day, the last opportunity to do so is between 9:00 and 9:30 am. In any case, **all players are expected to be at their assigned boards at the scheduled start time for round 1 – 10:00 am.** There is no check-in procedure. Section signs and pairings for round 1 will be posted before players arrive to let them know where they should go. *Players who do not arrive until after play has started will forfeit round 1.* Parents should be aware that calling or texting the tournament director to notify him they that are on the way does not relieve the player of this requirement. Players whose opponents are not present at 9:00 am will be re-paired. To avoid being withdrawn from the tournament, a player who arrives late must check in immediately with the chief tournament director.

**Withdrawing:** After the tournament has started, if you decide that you do not want to play any remaining rounds, you may withdraw from the tournament at any time; however, ***you must notify a tournament director that you are withdrawing*** before pairings are done for the next round. Notification must be given by means of a completed and signed Notice of Withdrawal form either presented to a tournament director or deposited in the chief tournament director's in-box. If you leave the tournament without notifying a tournament director, you will be paired in the next round as if you were still present and playing. This results in a forfeit for you, deprives your opponent of a game, and can cause other problems for players and tournament directors. ***Please be conscientious about this important matter!***

**Ratings:** Official USCF Regular ratings as of March 1, 2023 will be used for section eligibility and pairing purposes, except that if a player is officially unrated as of March 1, 2023 but earned a rating after the data cutoff date for the March 2023 official ratings, the player's most recent rating as indicated in the player's tournament history on the USCF website will be used.

**Changing Sections:** *Voluntary changes:* If a player chooses to move from one section to another in which he or she is also eligible to play, send an email to [info@chesscincinnati.com](mailto:info@chesscincinnati.com) or call/text Alan at 513-600-9915 to request the change. Such requests must be received by 10:00 am on Friday, March 24. No voluntary section changes will be allowed on the day of the tournament. *Required changes:* If an increase in a player's rating requires that he or she be put into a higher section (because he or she is no longer eligible to play in the section selected when entering the tournament), the tournament director will make this change and notify the player; no action is required on the player's part.

**Byes:** Half-point byes are optional, and most players do not take any. However, you may, if you choose, take one half-point bye for round 1, 2, 3 or 4. You will score one-half point for the bye round, equivalent to drawing a game. No one may take a half-point bye for round 5. Also, if you are paired out of round 1 (meaning that you are left without an opponent because there is an odd number of players in your section), you will be given a full-point bye for that round and may not take a half-point bye for any later round. Any additional bye taken after a full- or half-point bye will be a zero-point bye.

**Schedule:** All sections will play the same fixed schedule as shown below. Pairings will not be announced; players and their parents/coaches are expected to take responsibility for keeping track of the time and being where they need to be when the schedule indicates. The awards ceremony for all sections will follow as soon as possible after the conclusion of the tournament.

Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5
10:00 am	11:15 am	1:00 pm	2:15 pm	3:30 pm

**When Your Game is Over:** When you arrive at your board to start a game in each round, you will find a result sheet on the chess board. Fill in the parts that you can fill in before the game starts. When you finish your game:

- *Pause* the clock and raise your hand to call a tournament director. *Do not alter the game position or leave your board until a tournament director verifies the result of your game.* After he verifies the result of your game, fill in the rest of the information on the result sheet, sign the result sheet (both players sign), and give it to the tournament director.
- On the board where you just played, set the pieces up in their correct starting position to be ready for the next round. After your round 5 game, when you have reset the pieces, put them into a bag that the tournament director will provide to you and leave the bag on the chess board.
- Once you have re-set or bagged the pieces, leave the playing room promptly and quietly, taking the completed result sheet with you. Go to the scorers' table to turn in the result sheet to the scorekeeper for your section — *both players* are responsible for doing this together.
- If you like, you may record the result of your game on the pairing chart posted on your section's foam board; however, the official tournament results will be taken from the signed result sheets, so recording the result on the pairing chart is not necessary.
- Stay out of the tournament room until it is time for the next round to start.

**Equipment:** Pieces, boards, clocks, and scoresheets will be provided by Cincinnati Scholastic Chess. Players may use their own scoresheets, including approved electronic scoresheets, or scorebooks if they prefer. Pens and pencils will also be available for players who need them.

**Tiebreaks:** When two or more players are tied by score, the order of finish among them will be determined by application of the standard US Chess Federation tiebreak systems. These are, in order of application: (1) Modified Median, (2) Solkoff, (3) Cumulative, and (4) Cumulative of Opposition. Details about these tiebreak systems will be posted at the tournament.

## Part II: Rules of Tournament Chess

Tournament chess has many rules in addition to the rules of the game itself. Explained below are some of these tournament rules that players encounter most often. Everyone playing in the tournament is subject to these rules.

### 1. Sportsmanship

The rules require, and we expect, all players to behave in a courteous and sportsmanlike manner at all times and **never interfere in any way with anyone else's game**. Following are examples of courteous and sportsmanlike behavior:

- Except when health concerns dictate otherwise, shake hands with your opponent before and after your game.
- While your game is in progress, do not talk unless it is necessary to say something important to your opponent (such as making or responding to a draw offer, or pointing out an illegal move) or to a tournament director about your game.
- When your game is over, do not talk in the playing room except to the tournament director as necessary.
- Avoid behavior that might distract other players, including loud talk and noisy activity near where games are being played, whether you are inside or outside the tournament room.
- **Do not kibitz — ever!** To kibitz means basically to butt in. It is unsporting and against the rules to meddle in any way with someone else's game. Do not comment on anyone's game, to the players or to anyone else (except a tournament director when he asks you to). Commenting includes not only audible verbal remarks but also gestures or facial expressions that could be construed as comments, whether or not they are directed to anyone in particular. Do not behave in a way that distracts another player or makes another player uncomfortable.

## 2. Clock-Related Rules

You must use a clock regardless of what section you are playing in. You do not have the option, either individually or jointly with your opponent, to choose not to use a clock. After making a move, press the clock button on your side of the clock to stop your clock and start your opponent's clock. Do this after every move for the entire game.

- Know how to pause the clock; if you don't know, ask another player or the tournament director. When a clock is paused, its operation is suspended so that neither player's clock is running. Most clocks have an obvious pause button or switch.
- Know why to pause the clock. It is permitted to pause the clock when you have any question, claim or issue to discuss with the tournament director. You may *not* pause the clock for any other reason, for example: when you go to the restroom or when you consult your opponent's scoresheet to correct your own. (In fact, the rules say that you may not consult your opponent's scoresheet unless your own clock is running.)
- On each move press the clock with whichever hand you used to move your piece. You may not move your piece with one hand and press the clock with the other hand.
- Until your opponent presses his or her clock, it is not your move, so *do not make your move while your opponent's clock is running*. If it is obvious that your opponent has forgotten to press the clock, it is good sportsmanship to point this out, but you are not required to do so.
- After pressing the clock to complete a move, remove your hand entirely from the clock until pressing it again to complete the next move. You may not keep your hand on or in contact with the clock in between moves.

*Rules relating to the expiration of time:*

- If your opponent's time expires, you may claim a win (or draw) on time *if you have any time remaining on your own clock*. To make a claim, *pause* the clock as soon as you notice that your opponent's time has expired — this enables the tournament director to verify that you still have time remaining — and then raise your hand to get a tournament director's attention. When a player's time expires, it is said that his "flag fell"; the expiration of a player's time is called "flagfall."
- When making a claim as described above, you will be declared the winner only if you have mating material, which means that with the pieces you have remaining on the board it is possible to checkmate your opponent. If you do not have mating material, the game is a draw. You do not have mating material if you have only a king, a king and a bishop, a king and a knight, or a king and two knights, and you cannot force a checkmate.
- Only the two players who are playing a game and, in some circumstances, a tournament director may call flagfall in that game. For any other person to call attention to flagfall in any game in which he or she is not a player is unsportsmanlike interference in the game and a violation of USCF rules, for which the penalty can be expulsion from the tournament and forfeiture of all games played, at the sole discretion of the chief tournament director.
- If time expires for both you and your opponent without a claim of flagfall being made by either player, the game is a draw, regardless of the position on the board, unless the last move played was checkmate.
- A player's flag is considered fallen only when either the player or the opponent points this out. A checkmate or stalemate played on the board before flagfall is *called* determines the result of the game (as a win or draw respectively), even if the flag of the player who played the checkmate or stalemate had fallen before the move was made.

## 3. Touch-Move

The touch-move rule is in effect for all tournament games. You do not have the option, either individually or jointly with your opponent, to choose not to abide by the touch-move rule. A player may neither "take back" a move nor permit his or her opponent to do so, unless the move in question was illegal. In simple terms, the touch-move rules states:

- If you intentionally touch one of your own pieces, you must move that piece if you legally can.
- If you intentionally touch one of your opponent's pieces, you must capture that piece if you legally can.

- If you legally move one of your pieces to a square and let go of it so that physical contact between your hand and the piece is broken, it must remain on that square even if it is not the square to which you intended to move it.
- If you move a piece that you cannot legally move, you must put that piece back on the square where it was before you moved it and make a legal move.

The touch-move rule does not apply to any piece touched accidentally or to any piece not on the board (i.e., that has been captured and removed from the board). The touch-move rule also does not apply to adjusting a piece as long as a player adjusts the piece in the proper manner (that is, by saying “adjust” audibly before touching the piece).

#### 4. Taking Notation

“Taking notation” means recording the moves of a game, move by move, as it is played. If notation is required in your section, you must record not only your own moves but also your opponent’s moves. The paper on which moves are recorded is called a *scoresheet*, although some players use electronic scoresheets, which record the moves in a different way. For those who do not know how to take notation, instructions are provided in Part III.

If you play in the K–3 Championship or K–5 Non-Rated section, you *are not required* to take notation. However, if you chose not to take notation, you forfeit the right to make certain claims for which a reasonably complete scoresheet is required.

If you play in the K–5 Championship, K–5 U500, or Grade 6 section, you *are required* to take notation. **Exception:** *Both* players are excused from this requirement when *either* player has less than five minutes of time remaining. If you do not take notation, or stop doing so (except as just noted), you may be penalized.

During the course of a game your opponent might want to consult your scoresheet, or you might want to consult your opponent’s scoresheet, to correct moves or fill in missing moves. Doing so is allowed by the rules, and it is unsportsmanlike to refuse to allow your opponent to look at your scoresheet for this purpose, or for your opponent to refuse you the same courtesy. However, you may consult your opponent’s scoresheet only when your clock is running. If any issue arises relating to notation, pause the clock and request the assistance of the tournament director.

#### 5. Player Claims

In certain situations, you can make a claim to the tournament director for the imposition of a penalty or the determination of the game’s result. Examples are:

- Claiming a win on time when your opponent’s time has expired
- Claiming that your opponent made a move in violation of the touch-move rule
- Claiming that your opponent made an illegal move, such as failing to get out of check or castling illegally
- Claiming a draw on the basis of repetition of position or the 50-move rule
- Claiming any activity that is against the rules, such as leaving a hand on the clock in between moves, engaging in any distracting or unsportsmanlike behavior, or using an electronic scoresheet in an unpermitted manner

The correct way to make a claim is to pause the clock, raise your hand to get the tournament director’s attention, and explain the situation to the tournament director. The tournament director will then investigate the claim and decide whether to uphold or deny it. **If you are uncertain whether you can make a claim, or simply have a question, bring the matter to the tournament director’s attention immediately when the situation arises in the game!** Do not wait until the game is over to raise the issue because then it is too late to investigate or correct it.

Only the two players who are playing a game and, in some circumstances, a tournament director may make a claim relating to that game. No other person may make any claim on behalf of a player or indicate in any way that such a claim is possible. Any person who does so is subject to penalties at the discretion of the tournament director, which may include forfeiture of games and ejection from the tournament.

The usual penalty when a player violates a rule is to increase the opponent's remaining time by two minutes, but some rules provide for other penalties. Moreover, the tournament director in many cases has the authority to impose a different (harsher or lesser) penalty, or no penalty, at his discretion.

## 6. *Announcing Check*

You are not required to say "check" when you put your opponent in check, and most experienced players do not. Every player is always responsible for recognizing when he or she is in check.

If your opponent fails to recognize check and makes a move that does not defend against the check, you have the right to claim an illegal move. You may choose to make a claim or not. If you choose to make a claim, call a tournament director as explained under 5. *Player Claims* above. If you choose not to make a claim, you should, without making a move, immediately restart your opponent's clock and point out the check. Whether or not you make a claim, your opponent must "take back" the illegal move and make a legal move, subject to the touch-move rule.

When both you and your opponent fail to recognize a check, any later moves played stand until one player or the other recognizes the check, in which case you should pause the clock and bring the matter to the attention of a tournament director, who will decide what is to be done.

## 7. *Rules for Draws*

There are several ways for a game to end in a draw:

- *Stalemate*: You are stalemated when (1) it is your move, (2) you are not in check, and (3) you have no legal move. This does not mean only that your *king* can't move; it means that you have no legal move for *any piece* still on the board.
- *Mutual Agreement*: You and your opponent may agree to end the game as a draw. To do this, one of you offers a draw and the other accepts; but there are some rules about how to offer and accept a draw.
  - The correct time to offer a draw is after you move and before you press the clock.
    - If you offer a draw after pressing the clock — that is, when it is your opponent's move — your opponent may accept or reject your offer, or simply to ignore it because you didn't offer it in accordance with the rules.
    - If you offer a draw before making your move, your opponent has the right to have you move before deciding whether to accept or reject your draw offer. The draw offer stands until your opponent decides, regardless of what move you make, unless the move you play gives checkmate.
  - If you offer a draw correctly, your opponent must accept or reject it before moving. If your opponent moves without verbally accepting or rejecting it, the act of moving constitutes a rejection.
  - Once rejected, a draw offer is null. In this case either you or your opponent must make a new draw offer (on a different move) for the game to end as a draw by mutual agreement.
  - Frequently offering draws that your opponent rejects is unsportsmanlike behavior.
- *Insufficient Mating Material*: The game is drawn if both players have insufficient mating material. In this case both you and your opponent have only a king, a king and a bishop, a king and a knight, or a king and two knights, and neither of you can force a checkmate.
- *Repetition of Position*: If the identical position occurs for the third time in a game, either you or your opponent may claim a draw. Two positions are identical only if all the *same pieces* occupy precisely the *same squares* and possess the *same rights* with the *same player* to move. "Rights" refers to the ability to castle or to capture *en passant*. The occurrences of the same position do not need to be consecutive or even close together.

A draw claim based on repetition of position must be made on the move where the third repetition has just occurred or is about to occur. If another move is played before a claim is made, no claim can be made until the position repeats again. Also, to make a draw claim based on repetition of position, a player must have a scoresheet that is accurate enough to prove the claim unless he or she can demonstrate a perpetual check.

- *50-Move Rule:* If both players make 50 consecutive moves without moving any pawn and without making any capture, then either player may claim that the game is a draw unless the last move played resulted in checkmate. This series of 50 moves can begin at any point during the game, but if any capture or pawn move occurs, the 50-move count must begin all over again from that move. To claim a draw on the basis of the 50-move rule, you must have a scoresheet accurate enough to prove it, or agree with your opponent on a third party (such as a tournament director) to count moves while you and your opponent continue the game.

### ***8. Forfeits***

Players who did not request a bye for round 1 and who do not arrive until after play has started in round 1 will forfeit that round. These late-arriving players will be withdrawn from the tournament unless they notify the tournament director that they are present before round 2 pairings are generated.

Starting with the second round and for the remainder of the tournament, players who did not request a bye for a given round and do not appear at their assigned board for that round before half of their time for the time control (15 minutes) has elapsed will forfeit that game and be withdrawn from the tournament. A player who abandons a game in progress likewise forfeits. A player is considered to have abandoned a game if he or she (1) began the game by making one or more moves, (2) left the board and did not return for the duration of the round, and (3) did not resign or accept a draw offer before leaving the board. Any player withdrawn from the tournament because of a forfeit may ask the chief tournament director for readmission, but it is entirely at the chief tournament director's discretion whether to readmit him or her.

### Part III: Chess Notation

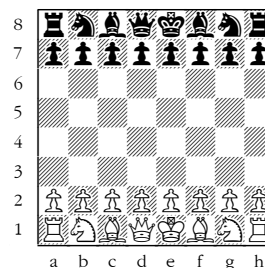
Chess notation is a system for recording the moves of a game. The official system now in use, *algebraic notation*, is described here. Players should become familiar with this system by recording a few games before playing in their first tournament where they will be required to take notation. If you forget to write down one or more moves, just skip a line on your scoresheet and carry on from where you are in the game. You may consult your opponent's scoresheet during or after the game to correct your own scoresheet.

1. Squares are identified using the files and ranks as coordinates.

a. The files are the rows of squares that run from one player to the other (or, in a diagram, “up and down” the board); they are labeled “a” through “h.” The ranks are the rows of squares that run across the board from left to right; they are numbered 1 through 8. Each square is identified by its file and rank: a6, d4, etc., with the file letter always preceding the rank number. *Files are always identified by small (lower case) letters. Thus “b” designates only the b file.*

b. The white pieces are set up on the side of the board where the files run from a on the left to h on the right, and the ranks run from 1 (closest to 8 (farthest away).

c. From the point of view of the person playing black, the black pieces are set up on the side of the board where the files run from h on the left to a on the right, and the ranks run from 8 (closest to 1 (farthest away).



2. Pieces are identified by letters: K = king, Q = queen, R = rook, B = bishop, N = knight. No letter is used for pawns. *Pieces are always identified by capital (upper case) letters. Thus “B” designates only a bishop.*

3. Moves that do not involve capturing a piece are recorded as follows:

a. For pieces other than pawns, moves are recorded by identifying the piece being moved and its destination square. For example, Nf3 means that a knight moved to square f3.

b. For pawns, only the destination square is recorded. For example, e4 means that a pawn moved to square e4.

4. Moves that involve capturing a piece are recorded with an “x” inserted before the destination square. The “x” signifies a capture.

a. For pieces other than pawns, captures are recorded by identifying the piece being moved followed by an “x” and its destination square. For example, Nxf3 means that a knight moved to square f3, capturing a piece or pawn that was located there.

b. For pawns, captures are recorded by identifying the file that the pawn moved from followed by an “x” and its destination square. For example, exf6 means that a pawn moved from the e file to square f6, capturing a piece or pawn that was located there.

5. If two pieces of the same type can move to the same square, either the rank or the file that the piece moved from is indicated in order to make it clear which piece was moved. For example, when a rook is on a1 and another rook is on f1, and they can both move to e1, the move is recorded as Rae1 if the a1 rook was moved, and as Rfe1 if the f1 rook was moved. Similarly if a knight is on f3 and another knight is on f5, either knight can capture a piece on d4, so the capture is recorded as either N3xd4 or N5xd4.

6. Special moves are noted as follows:
  - a. Check is indicated by “+” written at the end of the move, double check by “++”, and checkmate by a “#”; for example, Qa4+, Nh3++, Rd8#.
  - b. Castling is written as 0-0 when it is done on the kingside (files e through h) and as 0-0-0 when it is done on the queenside (files a through d). A convenient way to remember these codes is that the number of zeroes corresponds to the number of squares that the rook moves when castling: two squares on the kingside and three on the queenside.
  - c. *En passant* capture is recorded just as any other pawn capture is; for example, when a pawn on the e file moves to f6 and in the process captures a pawn that was on f5, the move is written “exf6.” The move record indicates the capturing pawn’s destination square, not the square occupied by the pawn that was captured.
  - d. Pawn promotion is written as any normal pawn move followed by “=” and the letter for the piece that replaces the pawn. For example, b8=Q indicates that a pawn was moved from b7 to b8 and promoted to a queen, while exf8=N indicates that a pawn on the e file captured a piece on f8 and was promoted to a knight. When the promotion results in check, double check, or checkmate, then +, ++, or # is added at the end of the move as applicable.
7. A complete move record comprises a move by white, always written in the left column, and a move by black, always written in the right column. Conventionally these move pairs are numbered, but the numbers are for convenience of reference and are not required for the game record. (On printed scoresheets, the move numbers are pre-printed, so players do not need to write them.) This example illustrates:

	White (left column)	Black (right column)
1.	e4	e5
2.	Nf3	Nc6
3.	Bb5	a3
	and so on.	

8. To distinguish moves played by black from moves played by white when the moves are not presented in columns, it is conventional to use an *ellipsis* (“...”) to designate moves played by black. Therefore, when an ellipsis precedes a move, it signifies that that the move was played by black and not by white. For example: “Bb4” can mean only that white moved a bishop to b4, while “... Bb4” can mean only that black moved a bishop to b4.
9. Only particular things can be recorded on a scoresheet, as detailed below.
  - a. The scoresheet may show identifying information, including some or all of these items: the players’ names (usually written in boxes designated by the color of pieces played), ratings, and pairing number; the event name, date, section, round, board, and time control; and the opening played.
  - b. While the game is being played, the players record only the moves played (by white and black), and optionally any or all of the following: the move numbers if these are not preprinted on the scoresheet, notations of time elapsed or remaining, and draw offers (designated by “=” written after the move when the offer is made). Players are not permitted to record any other comments or notations of any kind on the scoresheet.
  - c. When the game is over, the players may complete the scoresheet by recording the result and filling in missing information. It is not uncommon that each player also signs the other player’s scoresheet.
10. All scoresheets used in a tournament are the property of the organizer of that tournament, who may choose to collect them or not. Sometimes the organizer specifies a particular scoresheet form that must be used in the tournament.